From: Earl Hackett
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I have read the settlement documents posted on the internet. Assuming the documentation of the API functions and the communication protocols is sufficiently complete, accurate, and inclusive I find the settlement to be satisfactory.

However, the most common form of communication between computer users is by file exchange. Although the settlement requires the disclosure of all communication protocols, I did not see any mention of disclosure of file format definitions or specifications. The data contained in a document produced in Microsoft Word or Excel should be accessible to programs produced by other software vendors.

As for API documentation, my experience has shown that Microsoft documentation of their system API call and the interface with many of their programming languages is incomplete.   Omission of critical details from their documentation often has required many days of research to determine the precise operating characteristics of a command needed to achieve proper system operation. These omissions may be simple oversight on the part of Microsoft, but they have occurred more frequently than in my past experience with systems from IBM, DEC, and others.

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